II. Goal Setting and Student Learning

Clear statements of expectations regarding student learning allow schools and districts to focus professional development resources and energy on achievable goals. To meet the goals identified in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the intent of professional development is to increase the learning of all students while attending to the learning needs of subgroups of students. If professional development content is to accomplish the desired increases in student learning, the goals for student learning must be explicit and concrete.

A. Overview of the Component

Next Few Pages:
A. Overview of Component
B. Applying the Model's Operating Principles
C. Steps to Consider

Once data are analyzed, goals can be stated. When a district determines that reading achievement needs to be improved, the goal must be much more specific than a desire to "increase scores" on a reading test. Close scrutiny of reading achievement data will reveal if students need decoding and word attack skills, increased sight vocabulary, comprehension strategies, improved fluency, skill in reading non-fiction and technical material, etc. Likewise, when the study of student data identifies poor math achievement, closer scrutiny of test data (e.g., item analysis) can help districts and schools determine if the problem is generalized across all areas of math or specific to problem solving, number concepts, algorithms, or the application of math concepts to real-world situations. Specific goals enable faculties to decide exactly what they need to learn and provide focus throughout an improvement effort.

Typically, district and school goals are aligned but not congruent. After examining data for all students in a district, district leaders may identify literacy as the primary target for improvement. It may further set goals, such as "By the spring of 2004, 75 percent of students (the entire student population as well as of each major subgroup) will be reading on grade level, and 75 percent of students will meet or surpass the grade level benchmark for writing." The task then is for each school to closely study student data with respect to literacy. Elementary School A may determine that its reading program is currently resulting in grade-level achievement for 70 percent of its students while only 55 percent of students are meeting the writing benchmarks. Its goal for improvement might thus be to improve writing scores to passing for an additional 10 percent of its students in each of the next two years, and its staff development program is likely to focus on writing instruction and assessment. High School B, however, discovers in its study of student data that only 48 percent of its students are currently reading at grade level and 51 percent are meeting writing benchmarks. Clearly, both areas are in serious need of attention. This school's goals might include raising to grade level the reading scores and writing benchmark of an additional 15 percent of students per academic year. The professional development plan would then logically include the implementation of reading classes for struggling readers, with a small group of faculty engaging in staff development to support that effort. The English faculty might focus its staff development efforts on writing instruction and assessment to meet its annual goal, and the entire faculty might support the efforts of the reading and English departments by learning and implementing "reading across the curriculum" strategies and supporting an extensive recreational reading program.

GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TARGET

Listed below are various terms used for setting goals as part of the CSIP and the professional development planning. A description of each type of goal is included.

Student Learning Goal -- State Requirement

A student learning goal is a general statement of expectations for all graduates Student learning goals are broad and general. They are aligned with the district mission statement. Example: Prepare students to engage in life-long learning.

Long Range Goal -- State Requirement

Long range goals describe desired targets to be reached over an extended period of time. Example 1: All K-12 students will achieve at high levels in reading comprehension, prepared for success beyond high school. Example 2: By 2013-14 all students will be proficient in reading, math, and science as measured by the ITBS and ITED. (This is aligned with NCLB)

Annual Improvement Goal (AIG) -- State Requirement

AIGs are based on data from at least one district wide assessment. The AIGs describe the desired annual increase in reading, mathematics, and science (and other curriculum areas-as appropriate) for all students, for particular subgroups of students, or both. Annual improvement goals must be measurable and address improvement of student learning, not maintaining of current levels of achievement.

A district may use its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) under NCLB as its annual improvement goals for reading and mathematics required by Chapter 12. For example, if a school is performing below the state's trajectory, the state's target AMO can double as the AIG. If a school is performing above the state's trajectory, then the school's own trajectory is the baseline. Goals should be set to improve each year.

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) -- Federal Requirement

AMO is the target on the state trajectory for reading and mathematics proficiency for purposes of measuring adequate yearly progress.

The goals we develop in this seminar will support the attainment of annual goals so that content for professional development can be aligned with immediate student need.

Building-level Professional Development Target – **Non-regulatory Guidance (Essential for determining PD Content)**

Each building sets a target for professional development using district long-range and annual improvement goals and building-level data. The professional development target is more specific about instructional content than the district level annual improvement goal.

Thus, while the CSIP and Teacher Quality legislation expect each district to study the achievement data for all its students and set goals for improved student learning, individual schools within districts will need to plan how they will respond to district goals, given the specific data for the students in their building. This is not to suggest that schools must submit formal plans to the state, but rather that schools will need a plan to guide their own improvement efforts as they meet the state's expectations that individuals and schools align their improvement efforts with district improvement plans.

Setting the Professional Development Target

Although the federal (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001) and district goals may require the statement of specific gains in student achievement, it is recommended that for the purpose of operating within the proposed Iowa Professional Development Model, schools set a professional development target. The PD target describes exactly what it is they wish all their students to achieve. The PD target clarifies the purpose of the change effort and allows for continuous striving toward the ideal. The target clearly communicates to parents, students and staff the aspirations held for the building's children; the target also provides guidance for the prioritization of the myriad goals that must be included in CSIP. When the goals and the PD target at the top of the priority list motivate the drive for increased student learning, then staff development is free to address significant professional learning that can–and frequently does–translate into sizable student learning gains. The facing page further defines the relationship between a school's goals and the PD target.

Finally, when examination of student data reveals multiple needs, it is critical that the district/school focus on only one or two things at a time. Learning new curriculums and instructional strategies and the assessments to guide their use and determine their effectiveness takes considerable staff development time. Until schools are structured to significantly increase not only the time allotted for new learning opportunities for staff but time for collaborative study and work within the school day, existing resources will not support multiple initiatives at any one time.

Goal Setting Considerations

The Goal Statement forms the basis for the process of Professional Development so careful attention should be placed on formulating clear and accurate goal statements. A good way to remember how a goal statement should be defined is the old S.M.A.R.T. acronym used by many experts in goal setting, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, and Time-specific:

> Goal statements form the foundation for high-quality Professional Development. A goal is written in enough detail to make sense to all stakeholders, connected to a plan of action, reviewed often, and updated as progress is made.

Specific	State clearly what you want.
Measurable	How will you know you will have accomplished your goal?
Acceptable	Do the necessary stakeholders agree with the goal?
Realistic	Is it realistic for your abilities and the given time period?
Time-specific	How are you going to track your progress?

B. Applying the Model's Operating Principles – Goal Setting and Student Learning

The actions listed below are examples of how the Model's Operating Principles support goal setting and student learning:

<div style="border:1px solid; text-align:center">

Operating Principles
√ Focus on Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
√ Participative Decision-making (School & District)
√ Leadership
√ Simultaneity

</div>

Focus on Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

❑ The district has selected a priority area for professional development that is based on the district student achievement goals as per the CSIP process.
❑ The priority area for PD targets student learning in an instructional academic area that addresses student needs established by data.

Participative Decision Making

❑ Communications from the district and building level indicate that student learning and the delivery of quality instruction is of the highest priority.
❑ The Leadership team has been engaged in planning and has contributed to the selection of the professional development priority.
❑ All faculty members understand and support the district focus. Each educator sees his or her job as being an important part of a larger effort. Teachers and administrators believe the district goals for student achievement can be accomplished.
❑ All faculty members share a sense of urgency that actions need to be taken to support the learning of all students, including low performing students.

Leadership

❑ District and building leaders are relentless in their efforts to focus their efforts and time on the agreed-upon district goals and priority for PD.
❑ When making a decision about professional development action, leaders anchor their decisions on the data and the established priority.

<table>
<tr><td>

Common Pitfalls in Goal Setting and Student Learning

❑ District identifies too many goals and multiple priority areas.
❑ The priority area is too broad and results in a fragmented, menu-driven approach for designing professional development learning opportunities.
❑ Faculty members are unfamiliar with the goals/priorities and are unaware of data that established the rationale for these decisions.

</td></tr>
</table>

Simultaneity

❑ Context – The Superintendent provides the vision, direction, resources, and support necessary for staff to develop and agree on a district-wide focus.
❑ Process – Regular, consistent communication processes with the School Board, schools, district staff and community are in place. All stakeholders are aware of the goals and professional development priorities.
❑ Content – The district has identified multiple goals and actions to meet student needs. To accomplish gains in student achievement the PD priority focuses on instructional content in an academic focus area.

C. Steps to Consider – Goal Setting and Student Learning

The following steps are offered as a suggested guide to help local districts select a focus for professional development. The professional development planning process will not always follow a linear sequence, so the sequence below is not critical. The Tools and Resources suggested for each step are available in the Appendix.

❑ **Acquire stakeholder input and develop goals**
Follow established district procedures for involving appropriate teams e.g., CSIP Team, PD Leadership Team, Administrative Team, and School Improvement Advisory Committee. Teams will:
o Discuss findings and analysis of data taking into consideration the state trajectories.
o Set student Learning Goals, Long-range Goals and Annual Improvement Goals (AIG)/Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO); AYP reports.
o See Example on DE website.

> **In Part 4, Tools and Resources**
>
> 2(goal).1. Trajectories - State of Iowa & District
>
> DE website with trajectories http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/nclb/documents.html
>
> DE website on CSIP technical assistance: http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/csi/documents.html

❑ **Narrow the AMO/AIG to set a specific target for professional development**

> 2(goal).2. Sample Goal Statements and Worksheets

❑ **Disseminate Goals**
o Share district goal(s) with board as per CSIP requirements. Disseminate goal(s) to community following CSIP requirements.
o Communicate decisions
o Facilitate opportunities for faculty to process the link between student needs and the district/building goal(s) and the PD target. Utilize teacher and administrator's insight into goal decision to share with the board and the community.

❑ **Record Annual Improvement Goals/Annual Measurable Objectives in the CSIP.**
❑ **Record PD target in the District Career Development Plan.**
❑ **As a team, review the operating principles for Goal Setting.**
o Discuss how they may be applied to support goal setting and student learning in your district/building. Generate a list of actions needed to ensure that goal setting steps are fully supported.

> 2(goal).3. Operating Principles for Collecting/Analyzing Data
>
> 3(stan).1 District Career Development Plan Worksheet